Al-Kharaj: Journal of Islamic Economic and Business
Volume 8 (2), 2026
P-ISSN: 2686-262X; E-ISSN: 2685-9300

Driving Performance Through Motivation: How Productive Behavior Mediates Employee Performance in a Government Revenue Institution

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Keywords:
Motivation; Productive Behavior; Employee Performance; Meditation Analysis; Public Sector

Abstract

The present research investigation examines the effect of work motivation on employee performance, both in a direct manner and through an indirect mechanism through productive behavior functioning as a mediator. A quantitative explanatory research design utilizing survey-based data was implemented from 91 employees of a government institution in Nusa Tenggara Barat, Indonesia. Data were gathered using structured questionnaires and subsequently analyzed employing IBM SPSS Statistics 23, employing validity and reliability assessments, classical regression assumption examinations, multiple linear regression, determination coefficient analysis, F-statistics, t-statistics, and the Sobel test. The findings demonstrate that work motivation exerts a significant effect on productive behavior and employee performance, and that productive behavior, in turn, shows a positive and statistically significant impact on employee performance. The Sobel test confirms that productive behavior partially acted as an intermediary in the relationship linking work motivation and employee performance. These results emphasize the importance of enhancing employee motivation and productivity in enhancing performance outcomes, offering practical contributions to human resource management within public-domain organizations.

INTRODUCTION

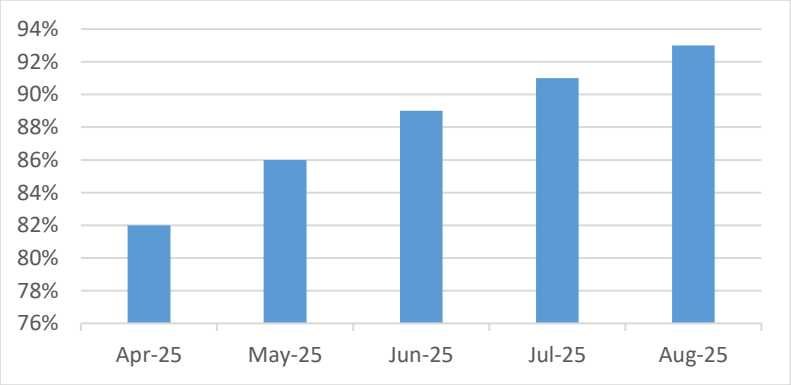
Employees are a central factor in determining organizational success in both private and public sectors. From a management perspective, human resources are not merely organizational assets but also the primary drivers of direction, creativity, and innovation in achieving organizational objectives (Agustian et al., 2023). Unlike other resources such as capital, technology, or infrastructure, which tend to be static, human resources possess dynamic capabilities that can continuously develop through improvements in knowledge, skills, and motivation (Leso et al., 2024). Consequently, high-quality human resources contribute significantly to organizational effectiveness, including within government institutions that are increasingly required to deliver public services in a productive, responsive, and adaptive manner (Rachman, 2024). In bureaucratic settings, employees are expected not only to perform administrative duties but also to demonstrate performance that reflects accountability and service quality (Hwang, 2023). Therefore, the quality of human resources is ultimately reflected in employee performance, which serves as a fundamental indicator of organizational success in achieving its vision, mission, and strategic goals.

Employee performance is a core concept in human resource management, reflecting the degree to which employees perform tasks and responsibilities entrusted to them in accordance with organizational standards. Performance does not merely represent both the amount and standard of work outcomes, but also signifies staff members' tangible contributions to

organizational objectives (Gagné & Hewett, 2025). Scholars have offered various definitions of performance, yet they converge on the notion that performance concerns the results achieved in line with predetermined responsibilities and standards (Mangkunegara, 2017; Mangkuprawira, 2004). Mangkunegara (2017) defines performance as the qualitative and quantitative outcomes achieved by employees in performing their duties, whereas Mangkuprawira (2004) emphasizes employees' willingness, individually or collectively, to complete work in accordance with organizational expectations. These perspectives highlight the importance of employee performance as an indicator of how effectively human resources support organizational success, particularly in public institutions that are required to provide efficient and effective public services.

Assessing employee performance requires indicators that objectively capture the quality of individual contributions to the organization. Mangkunegara (2017) identifies two primary indicators of performance: quality and quantity. Quality refers to the degree to which work outcomes meet established standards, whereas quantity relates to the amount of work accomplished within a specified period (Moeheriono, 2014). In this context, responsibility and cooperation are considered critical behavioral elements shaping work quality, as they reflect commitment and interpersonal competence in task execution. Initiative, on the other hand, contributes to work quantity by encouraging proactive behavior, responsiveness, and independent task completion. Complementing this view, Robbins & Judge (2017) propose broader performance indicators, including quality of work, volume of output, punctuality, efficiency, autonomy, and organizational commitment. These indicators underscore that performance evaluation should not only focus on outcomes but also incorporate behavioral dimensions such as discipline, autonomy, and loyalty, reinforcing the notion that employee performance encompasses both results and work-related behavior.

Figure 1. Percentage of Employee Performance at BAPPENDA West Nusa Tenggara



Empirical evidence from the West Nusa Tenggara Province Regional Revenue Management Agency (BAPPENDA) illustrates the dynamic nature of employee performance in public sector organizations. Performance data over five months indicates a consistent upward trend, with performance levels increasing from 82% in April 2025 to 93% in August 2025. These performance outcomes are derived from multiple indicators, including employee work targets, discipline, initiative, teamwork, and responsibility for work results. Although performance was initially below the optimal standard, gradual improvements suggest enhanced productivity and effectiveness over time. This trend reflects the potential effectiveness of human resource management strategies, work discipline, supervision, and motivational practices implemented within the organization.

However, employee performance does not take place independently, but rather is influenced by multiple personal and institutional determinants. Robbins & Judge (2017) emphasize that performance is shaped by attitudes and behaviors, where attitudes represent internal evaluations toward work situations and behaviors represent their observable manifestations. This perspective highlights the importance of understanding the motivational processes that shape employees' attitudes and behaviors, ultimately influencing performance outcomes. Consequently, examining work motivation as a key independent variable is essential for explaining how behavioral mechanisms within organizational contexts shape performance.

Work motivation is widely recognized as a fundamental element of organizational behavior that drives employees to achieve optimal performance. Robbins & Judge (2017) conceptualize motivation as a process describing the level of strength, orientation, and consistency of individual efforts directed at goal achievement, indicating that motivation reflects sustained commitment rather than momentary impulses. Similarly, Mangkunegara (2017) conceptualizes work motivation as a state that stimulates and encourages employees in order to pursue the organization's objectives by fulfilling their personal and professional needs. Zainal (2014) further explains motivation as a collection of beliefs and values that shape individual behavior according to personal priorities, while Handoko (2011) describes motivation as a driving force that directs individuals to strive toward organizational goals. Luthans (2011) strengthens this view by asserting that motivation originates from physiological and psychological deficiencies that activate goal-directed behavior. Collectively, these perspectives suggest that work motivation is a complex process involving the interaction of needs, values, attitudes, and goals that ultimately drives productive employee behavior.

Motivation can be derived from both intrinsic and extrinsic sources. Maslow (2016) explains that intrinsic motivation arises from internal drives such as personal growth, achievement, and self-fulfillment, which are associated with higher-level human needs and tend to be more enduring. In contrast, extrinsic motivation originates from external factors related to lower-level needs, including adequate wages, job security, facilities, status, recognition, and social interaction in the workplace. The effectiveness of extrinsic motivation is often reflected in perceptions of wage equity and fairness in managerial positions, in which employees perceive compensation and career advancement as just and proportional to their efforts.

Within this motivational framework, productive behavior plays a crucial mediating role between motivation and performance. Motivation is more likely to enhance performance when it is translated into productive behavior in daily work activities. Sedarmayanti (2017) characterizes productive individuals as confident, self-actualized, and supported by conducive work environments. Jex & Britt (2008) emphasize that productive behavior represents positive employee contributions to organizational goals, manifested through task performance, organizational citizenship behavior, and innovation. Arfian et al. (2015) further argue that productive behavior emerges from interactions between individuals and their work environment, characterized by creativity, innovation, and tangible contributions. Suhariadi (2005) highlights effectiveness and efficiency as key dimensions of productive behavior, reflected in goal achievement, prudent resource utilization, timely task completion, and low absenteeism. These perspectives collectively suggest that productive behavior embodies the behavioral realization of motivation, expressed through efficiency and effectiveness in achieving organizational objectives.

Preliminary observations and interviews conducted at BAPPENDA of West Nusa Tenggara Province indicate that work motivation plays a vital role in improving employee

performance. However, variations in productive behavior remain evident. While some employees exhibit high motivation and initiative, differences in productive behavior appear to influence overall performance outcomes. This condition suggests that productive behavior may function as a critical intermediary that explains how work motivation is converted into employee performance.

Referring to the empirical phenomena and theoretical framework considerations outlined previously discussed, the current study aims to explore the effect of work motivation on employee performance and to analyze the mediating role of productive behavior in this relationship within a public sector organization. Specifically, this research addresses whether productive behavior functions as a behavioral channel through which motivation exerts an effect on employee performance in a regional government revenue agency. The originality of this research resides in its empirical positioning of productive behavior as an intervening variable within a public-sector context, an area that remains underexplored in the existing literature. By focusing on a regional government institution, this study extends motivation–performance theories. It offers practical, valuable insights regarding the public-sector human capital management practices and strategies to sustain employee performance through motivational and behavioral mechanisms.

METHODS

The present study adopted a quantitative approach design by utilizing an associative design approach aimed at investigating the influence of work motivation on employee performance, with productive behavior as a mediating construct. Quantitative research is rooted in the positivist paradigm and seeks to examine proposed hypotheses through objective and quantifiable data (Sugiyono, 2019). The associative approach was selected because it enables the identification of relationships and causal influences among variables (Umar, 2008), while the systematic and generalizable nature of quantitative research ensures empirical rigor (Kerlinger, 2006). This design was considered appropriate for addressing the research questions and generating replicable empirical evidence.

The study was conducted at the West Nusa Tenggara Regional Revenue Management Office Province (BAPPENDA NTB), involving all 91 employees as the research participants population and sample group through a census sampling technique (Sugiyono, 2019). Data were collected using a survey method with structured questionnaires measuring work motivation, productive behavior, and employee performance using a Likert scale, complemented by limited interviews and document analysis to enrich the data (Arikunto, 2017; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Kerlinger, 2006). The collected primary and secondary data were analyzed using appropriate quantitative statistical techniques to examine both direct and mediating effects among variables, applying established analytical criteria to ensure clarity, accuracy, and replicability without presenting commonly known statistical formulas.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Validity Test

Before hypothesis testing, the validity of all measurement instruments was assessed to ensure that the items used accurately represented the constructs of work motivation, productive behavior, and employee performance. The validity of each item was examined assessed through

the Pearson product–moment correlation technique by comparing each item's correlation coefficient (r-value) with the reference value from r-table (.174) at N = 91 and at a significance threshold of α = .05. A questionnaire item was is regarded as valid when the computed r exceeded the critical obtained score and the associated significance level was below .05.

Table 1. Results of the Validity Test

Variable	Item	Item–Total Correlation (r)	r-table	Sig.	N
Employee Performance (Y)	Y1	.713	.174	< .001	91
	Y2	.543	.174	< .001	91
	Y3	.725	.174	< .001	91
	Y4	.600	.174	< .001	91
	Y5	.617	.174	< .001	91
	Y6	.626	.174	< .001	91
	Y7	.709	.174	< .001	91
	Y8	.607	.174	< .001	91
	Y9	.487	.174	< .001	91
	Y10	.452	.174	< .001	91
Work Motivation (X)	X1	.734	.174	< .001	91
	X2	.761	.174	< .001	91
	X3	.500	.174	< .001	91
	X4	.712	.174	< .001	91
	X5	.670	.174	< .001	91
	X6	.733	.174	< .001	91
Productive Behavior (Z)	Z1	.562	.174	< .001	91
	Z2	.693	.174	< .001	91
	Z3	.752	.174	< .001	91
	Z4	.747	.174	< .001	91
	Z5	.724	.174	< .001	91
	Z6	.747	.174	< .001	91
	Z7	.706	.174	< .001	91
	Z8	.647	.174	< .001	91
	Z9	.710	.174	< .001	91
	Z10	.716	.174	< .001	91

Source: Primary data processed using IBM SPSS Statistics 23 (2026)

The findings demonstrate that every questionnaire measurement item within the three variables satisfied the validity criteria. With respect to work motivation, item–total correlation coefficients ranged from .500 to .761 (p = .000). In contrast, productive behavior items demonstrated *r* values between .562 and .752 (p = .000). Similarly, the employee performance construct showed satisfactory validity, with correlation coefficients ranging from .452 to .725 (p = .000). These findings, summarized in Table 1, confirm that each indicator exhibited a meaningful association with its respective total score, indicating that the instruments consistently captured variations in motivational, behavioral, and performance-related attributes among employees.

Overall, the validity testing results demonstrate that the measurement instruments used

in this study were psychometrically sound and suitable for further statistical analysis. The consistently significant correlations across all constructs indicate that the data recorded were precise and adequately reflected the underlying variables. Consequently, the validated instruments provided a reliable empirical basis for subsequent regression and mediation analyses examining the immediate influence of work motivation on employee performance and the intervening role of productive behavior.

Reliability Test

The reliability of the instrument was assessed to ensure internal consistency across the items used to assess work motivation, productive behavior, and employee performance. Reliability analysis was conducted employing Cronbach's alpha, yielding a commonly accepted threshold of 0.70, indicating adequate reliability. The reliability analysis results for all constructs as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Results of the Reliability Test

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Employee Performance	.784	10
Work Motivation	.769	6
Productive Behavior	.885	10

Source: Primary data processed using IBM SPSS Statistics 23 (2026)

The findings demonstrate that all three variables met the reliability criteria. Employee performance, measured using 10 items, generated a Cronbach's Alpha value of .784, suggesting acceptable internal consistency within the instrument. Similarly, work motivation, assessed using six items, yielded a reliability coefficient of .769, indicating satisfactory reliability. These findings imply that the indicators for each variable reliably assessed the same underlying dimension.

Productive behavior exhibited the highest level of reliability among the constructs, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .885 across 10 items. This value indicates very strong internal consistency and suggests that the indicators used to capture productive behavior were highly cohesive. Overall, the reliability assessment confirms that each research instrument is reliable and suitable for subsequent statistical analyses, including regression and mediation analyses, thereby offering a strong empirical foundation for analyzing the associations among the variables under study.

Normality Test

A normality assessment was undertaken to determine whether the research dataset met the normality assumption, a prerequisite for parametric regression analysis. The assessment of normality was conducted utilizing the One-Sample Kolmogorov–Smirnov test applied to the unstandardized residuals. The decision criterion implemented in this research was that a p-value (p) exceeding .05 signifies following a normal distribution pattern.

Table 3. Results of the One-Sample Kolmogorov—Smirnov Normality Test

Statistic	Value
N	91
Mean	.000
Standard Deviation	3.286

Statistic	Value
K–S Test Statistic	.063
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.200

Source: Primary data processed using IBM SPSS Statistics 23 (2026)

As presented in Table 3, the Kolmogorov–Smirnov statistic yielded a test statistic of .063 with an asymptotic significance value of .200. Since the obtained p-value surpassed the predetermined threshold of .05, the null hypothesis that normal data distribution could not be rejected. This result confirms that the residual terms followed a normal distribution, indicating that the normality assumption required for subsequent regression and mediation analyses was satisfactorily fulfilled.

The fulfillment of the normality assumption indicates that the responses collected from employees of the West Nusa Tenggara Regional Revenue Management Office Province were approximately normally distributed and free of extreme skewness or kurtosis. Consequently, the data can be considered representative of the study population and suitable for parametric statistical procedures. This condition enhances the instrument's validity and reliability, regression findings, and supports the strength of the inferential conclusions derived from the analysis.

Multicolinierity Test

A multicollinearity assessment was performed to identify that high intercorrelations existed among predictor variables in the regression model, as multicollinearity may bias coefficient estimates and hinder the interpretation of individual predictors. The assessment was based on tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values: tolerance scores exceeding 0.10 and VIF statistics below 10.00 confirm that multicollinearity is not present.

Table 4. Results of the Multicollinearity Test (Tolerance and VIF)

Regression Model	Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Tolerance	VIF
Model 1	Productive Behavior	Work Motivation	1.000	1.000
Model 2	Employee Performance	Work Motivation	.409	2.447
Model 2	Employee Performance	Productive Behavior	.409	2.447

Source: Primary data processed using IBM SPSS Statistics 23 (2026)

For the first regression model, in which work motivation was the predictor of productive behavior, the results indicated a tolerance of 1.000 and a VIF of 1.000 for work motivation, as shown in Table 4. These values clearly exceeded the recommended thresholds, confirming that no multicollinearity issue was present in this model. Accordingly, work motivation could be reliably included as an independent variable to explain variations in productive behavior without statistical distortion.

In the second regression model, which examined the simultaneous impacts of work motivation and productive behavior on employee performance, both predictors demonstrated tolerance values of .409 and VIF values of 2.447 (Table 4). These statistics fall well within acceptable limits, indicating that the independent variables were not highly correlated. Therefore, the regression model was free of multicollinearity, allowing both work motivation and productive behavior to be analyzed concurrently in explaining employee performance, yielding valid and interpretable coefficient estimates.

Heteroscedasticity Test

A heteroscedasticity test was conducted to evaluate whether the variance of the residuals remains constant across varying levels of the predictor variables, as heteroscedasticity can bias standard errors and reduce the accuracy of regression estimations. The Glejser test was employed in this study, with the decision criterion that a significance value (*p*) greater than .05 suggest that heteroscedasticity is not present.

Table 5. Results of the Heteroscedasticity Test (Glesjer Test)

Regression Model	Dependent Variable (Absolute Residual)	Independent Variable	B	t	Sig.
Model 1	Abs_Res1	Work Motivation	−.006	−.087	.931
Model 2	Abs_Res2	Work Motivation	.192	1.570	.120
Model 2	Abs_Res2	Productive Behavior	−.135	−1.868	.065

Source: Primary data processed using IBM SPSS Statistics 23 (2026)

As shown in Table 5, the Glejser test results for the first regression model, which examined the impact of work motivation on productive behavior, indicated no statistically significant relationship between work motivation and the absolute residual values (β = -0.009; t = -0.087; p = 0.931). This finding suggests that work motivation did not significantly explain the variance in the residuals, suggesting that the model was not heteroscedastic.

Similarly, the second regression model, which included both work motivation and productive behavior as predictors of employee performance, showed no evidence of heteroscedasticity. As presented in Table 5, the significance values for work motivation (*p* = .120) and productive behavior (*p* = .065) were both above the .05 threshold. These results confirm that the variability of the residual terms was homogeneous across predictor categories. Consequently, both regression models satisfied the homoscedasticity assumption, supporting the validity and robustness of the subsequent linear regression and mediation analyses.

Simultaneous Test (F-test)

The joint significance test (F-statistic) is employed in order to determine whether the predictor variables jointly significantly affect the outcome variable within the regression equation, and to assess the overall model fit. The decision rule for the F-test states that the hypothesis is supported when the p-value (Sig.) falls below 0.05 or when the computed F-statistic is greater than the critical F value.

Table 6. Results of the Simultaneous Significance Test (F-Test)

Model	Dependent Variable	Predictors	F-value	Sig.
1	Productive Behavior	Work Motivation	128.783	.000
2	Employee Performance	Productive Behavior, Work Motivation	26.852	.000

Source: Primary data processed using IBM SPSS Statistics 23 (2026)

Referring to the findings of the F-test for Model 1, as presented in Table 6, shows a p-value of 0.000, which is below 0.05, and the F-statistic (128.783) exceeds the critical value in the F table. This indicates that work motivation simultaneously significantly affects productive behavior. Furthermore, the F-test results for Model 2, shown in Table 4.18, indicate a significance level of 0.000 (< 0.05) and an F-statistic of 26.852, which surpasses the threshold value in the F table. These findings demonstrate that work motivation and productive behavior jointly have a

statistically significant impact on employee performance.

Thus, the findings of the simultaneous tests for both regression models confirm that the models employed in this study are statistically valid and can explain the combined effects of the predictor variables on the outcome.

Partial Test (t-test)

The partial significance test (t-test) is performed to examine the individual impact of each predictor on the outcome variable within the regression framework. This test assesses the statistical significance of each predictor's contribution separately. The criteria for determining the t-test results are grounded on the established significance threshold (p-value) along with the comparison between the obtained t statistic and the critical value from the t distribution. The proposed hypothesis is confirmed when the p-value falls below 0.05 or if the computed t-statistic is higher than the critical t-score, indicating that the predictor significantly impacts the outcome variable.

Table 7. Results of the Partial Significance Test (t-Test)

Model	Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-value	Sig.
1	Productive Behavior	Work Motivation	1.302	0.115	0.769	11.348	.000
2	Employee Performance	Work Motivation	0.275	0.217	0.166	4.267	.001
2	Employee Performance	Productive Behavior	0.466	0.128	0.478	3.640	.000

Source: Primary data processed using IBM SPSS Statistics 23 (2026)

In light of the results of the partial test (t-test) for Model 1 as presented in Table 4.19, work motivation shows a statistically meaningful influence on productive conduct. This is evidenced by a p-value of 0.000, which falls below 0.05, accompanied by a computed t-statistic of 11.348, which surpasses the critical t-table value. Accordingly, the second hypothesis of this study, proposing that work motivation partially affects productive behavior, is accepted. The positive regression coefficient amounting to 1.302 implies that a rise in work motivation is associated with increased employees' productive behavior.

Furthermore, the partial test findings (t-test) for Regression Model 2, shown in Table 7, reveal that work motivation has a statistically meaningful partial effect on employee performance, as evidenced by a significance value of 0.001 (< 0.05) and a obtained t value exceeding the t-table value. Furthermore, productive behavior also demonstrates a statistically reliable impact on employee performance, with a p-value of 0.000 along with a computed t-statistic of 3.640 exceeding the critical t-table value. These findings suggest that productive behavior contributes substantially to improving employee performance and further support the adequacy of the regression model applied in this research.

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The coefficient of determination (R^2) represents the percentage of the variance within the dependent variable explained by the independent predictors included in a regression analytical framework. In multiple linear regression, this test is assessed using the Adjusted R-Square coefficient obtained in the Model Summary table, which has been adjusted for the number of predictors incorporated in the model. The closer the R-squared coefficient is to one, the stronger the explanatory power of the regression model in explaining variability changes in the outcome variable.

Table 8. Results of the Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Model	Dependent Variable	Predictors	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	Productive Behavior	Work Motivation	0.769	0.591	0.587	2.75184
2	Employee Performance	Work Motivation, Productive Behavior	0.616	0.379	0.365	3.32348

Source: Primary data processed using IBM SPSS Statistics 23 (2026)

Drawing upon Table 8, the results of the coefficient of determination test for Model 1 show an Adjusted R^2 coefficient of 0.587. This suggests that work motivation represents 58.7% of the variation in productive behavior, with the remaining 41.3% attributable to factors outside the scope of this research model. These results indicate that the regression equation possesses a relatively substantial explanatory capacity in describing the linkage between work motivation and productive behavior.

Furthermore, Table 8 presents the results of the determination coefficient analysis for Model 2, which yields an adjusted R^2 of 0.365. This evidence suggests that work motivation and productive behavior jointly account for 36.5% concerning the variation in employee performance, whereas the residual 63.5% is attributable to variables not included within the model. Although the R-squared coefficient for Model 2 is lower compared with that for Model 1, the findings indicate that the regression model still makes a meaningful contribution to explaining employee performance.

Overall, the Adjusted R-Square values obtained from both models demonstrate that predictor variables employed in this study play an important role in explaining outcome variables. Therefore, the regression analysis models developed in this study are considered appropriate for further analysis.

Sobel Test

The Sobel test is utilized to determine whether the mediator construct significantly explains the link in the relationship between the predictor and outcome constructs. The decision criterion relies on the Z statistic, with mediation considered significant if the absolute Z value ($|Z|$) exceeds 1.96. Mediation is classified as complete mediation when the direct influence of the predictor construct on the effect of the predictor on the outcome becomes non-significant after incorporating the mediator. In contrast, partial mediation is established when the direct influence remains significant but is smaller than the total effect.

Table 9. Results of the Sobel Test

Path	Coefficient	Std. Error	Z-value	p-value	Mediation Effect
a (Work Motivation → Productive Behavior)	1.302	0.115			
b (Productive Behavior → Employee Performance)	0.466	0.128			
Sobel Test			**3.466**	**0.001**	**Significant (Partial Mediation)**

Source: Primary data processed using IBM SPSS Statistics 23 (2026)

According to the Sobel test results, the coefficient of the independent variable on the

mediating variable (a) is 1.302 with a standard error (Sa) of 0.115, while the parameter estimate of the mediator toward the outcome variable (b) is 0.466 with a standard error (Sb) of 0.128. The Sobel mediation test yields a Z-statistic of 3.466 with a p-value of 0.001. Given that the calculated Z-statistic exceeds 1.96 and the p-value is below 0.05, the mediating variable has a statistically significant mediating effect.

These findings indicate that productive behavior significantly acts as a mediator of the relationship between work motivation and employee performance. Given that the direct impact of work motivation on employee performance remains significant after controlling for the mediating variable, albeit with reduced magnitude, the mediation effect observed in this study can be classified as partial mediation. Therefore, productive behavior serves as an important mechanism through which work motivation influences employee performance.

DISCUSSION

The Effect of Work Motivation on Employee Performance

The first hypothesis examined the partial effect of work motivation on employee performance. The statistical findings suggest that work motivation has a significant positive effect on performance outcomes. This indicates that motivated employees demonstrate greater ability in achieving performance targets, maintaining quality standards, and contributing effectively to organizational goals.

This finding supports the assumption that motivation functions as an internal force that directs employee effort toward performance improvement. According to Kanfer et al. (2017), motivation enhances focus and work intensity, enabling employees to optimize their abilities in completing assigned tasks. Thus, the outcomes of this research are reasonable and aligned with theoretical expectations.

Moreover, the present empirical findings are consistent with earlier studies that emphasize motivation as a key determinant of employee performance. Sari & Nugroho (2023), Layek & Koodamara (2024), and Nusraningrum et al. (2024) revealed that employees with strong intrinsic and extrinsic motivation tend to demonstrate superior performance relative to those exhibiting lower motivation levels. Consequently, the current study reinforces the view that work motivation is an indispensable determinant in enhancing employee performance and supports existing performance-related theories rather than contradicting them.

The Effect of Work Motivation on Productive Behavior

The second hypothesis posited that work motivation significantly affects productivity behavior. The regression outcomes provide strong empirical support for this hypothesis, as indicated by a significant t-statistic and a positive regression coefficient. This finding suggests that employees possessing higher degrees of work motivation are more likely to exhibit more productive behaviors in performing their duties.

From a theoretical standpoint, this result aligns with motivation theory, which asserts that motivation is a fundamental driver of individual behavior in the workplace. Employees with strong motivation are more inclined to show initiative, persistence, and responsibility, which are essential components of productive behavior. The results are in agreement with the expectancy theory, which argues that individuals exert greater effort when they perceive that their efforts will result in desired outcomes (Tam et al., 2022).

In addition, this result corroborates previous prior empirical research that identified a positive and statistically significant association between work motivation and productive behavior. Research by Affainie & Qutieshat (2023), Grant & Shandell (2022), and Van Tam (2025) showed that motivated staff display higher degrees of discipline, efficiency, and task engagement. Therefore, the present study strengthens existing evidence by confirming that work motivation serves a pivotal function in shaping productive behavior, particularly within the organizational context examined in the present investigation.

The Effect of Productive Behavior on Employee Performance

The third hypothesis addressed the effect of productive behavior on employee performance. The empirical evidence confirms that productive behavior significantly affects performance, as evidenced by the large regression coefficient and t-value. This result indicates that employees who consistently display productive behaviors are more likely to achieve higher performance levels.

Productive behavior reflects employees' ability to manage time effectively, complete tasks efficiently, and maintain work discipline. Such behaviors naturally translate into improved performance outcomes. This finding is in line with behavioral performance theory, which suggests that observable work behaviors are direct predictors of performance results (Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2024).

Previous studies also support this relationship. Hong & Zainal (2022), Qalati et al. (2022), and Susanto et al. (2024) argued that productive behavior acts as a behavioral mechanism that transforms individual capacity into tangible performance outcomes. Therefore, the present study not only supports earlier research but also provides empirical confirmation that productive behavior represents a key determinant of employee performance in organizational settings.

The Mediating Role of Productive Behavior in the Relationship between Work Motivation and Employee Performance

The fourth hypothesis investigated whether productive behavior intervenes I the relationship between work motivation and employee performance. The Sobel test findings indicate a significant mediating effect, confirming that productive behavior serves as an important process through which work motivation impact performance.

This finding implies that motivation by itself is inadequate to maximize performance unless it is translated into productive work behaviors. In other words, motivated employees tend to channel their motivation into productive actions, thereby enhancing their performance. This result is consistent with the mediation framework proposed by Baron and Kenny, which emphasizes the role of intervening variables in explaining complex causal relationships (Ilham et al., 2018).

Furthermore, the identification of partial mediation suggests that work motivation affects employee performance through both direct and indirect pathways via productive behavior. This outcome aligns with previous studies that found behavioral variables to mediate the association between psychological factors and performance results (Iksan, Hisbullah, & Burhan, 2018). Hence, the empirical evidence of this study extend existing theoretical frameworks by empirically illustrating that productive behavior strengthens the motivational pathway toward improved employee performance.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

The current research examined the interconnection among work motivation, productive behavior, and employee performance, and analyzed the intermediary function of productive behavior within the linkage between work motivation and employee performance. Based on the statistical analysis results, a number of key conclusions may be formulated.

First, the evidence demonstrate that work motivation has a significant positive impact on productivity. This indicates that employees exhibiting higher levels of motivation are inclined to exhibit more constructive, efficient, and goal-oriented behaviors in their daily work activities. Second, work motivation has been proven to exert a significant direct influence on employee performance, suggesting that motivated employees become better able to meet performance targets and fulfill organizational expectations.

Third, productive behavior significantly influences employee performance. This result confirms that performance is not merely a function of motivation or ability, but is also shaped by how employees translate their motivation into productive actions. Finally, the Sobel test results reveal that productive behavior performs a significant mediating function in the association between work motivation and employee performance. This indicates that work motivation affects employee performance via direct as well as indirect effects through productive behavior, underscoring the importance of behavioral mechanisms in explaining performance outcomes.

Overall, this research enriches the existing literature by offering empirical support that integrates motivational and behavioral perspectives to explain employee performance. By positing productive behavior by positioning it as a mediating construct, this research extends prior research. It offers a more holistic understanding of how psychological factors are translated into measurable performance in organizational settings.

Nevertheless, this study has certain limitations that should be recognized. The study was carried out within a single government organization, which potentially limits the generalizability of the findings beyond other specific organizational settings. In addition, reliance on cross-sectional data constrains the capacity to observe changes in motivation, behavior, and performance over time. Therefore, the conclusions of this study should be interpreted cautiously and within the scope of the research setting.

Suggestions and Recommendations

In light of the study's findings and limitations, several recommendations are offered. For practitioners, particularly organizational leaders and policymakers, it is recommended to focus not only on enhancing employee motivation but also on fostering productive work behaviors. Training programs, performance management systems, and organizational cultures that encourage discipline, efficiency, and proactive behavior may help translate motivation into improved performance outcomes.

For future research, it is suggested that similar studies be conducted in different organizational sectors or regions to improve external validity. Longitudinal designs are also recommended to capture better the dynamic relationships among work motivation, productive behavior, and employee performance over time. Additionally, future studies may incorporate other relevant variables, including leadership style and organizational culture, or job satisfaction, to further enrich the explanatory power of the research model.

By addressing these recommendations, future research can build on this study's findings and contribute more deeply to advance the development of human resource management theory and practice, particularly by elucidating the mechanisms by which motivation influences employee performance.

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